

SAN DIEGO RABBIT NEWS

SPRING 2004

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Alfalfa and Timothy-Based Pellets: What's the "Skinny?"

A wonderful consequence of the increased interest in house rabbits is the increased variety of commercial pellets now available to feed our rabbits. However, this is also a mixed blessing, because the many choices can be confusing. One major confusion is over pellet composition. There are pellets with high energy and low energy, alfalfa-based and timothy-based.

Which is best? There's no single answer because it is dictated by your rabbit's individual needs.

High energy pellets are largely aimed at the breeding industry, and especially needed for pregnant or lactating rabbits (accidents can happen!). Nursing babies puts a high demand on energy, protein, and calcium. Thus, until the babies are weaned, mama bun should receive unlimited pellets, and especially pellets with a higher content of fat, protein and calcium, all of which goes into her milk for the babies. For a mature, non-lactating rabbit, this pellet is pretty nutrient-rich and is not my first choice, but it can be okay for most rabbits if offered in limited quantities. Purina "red bag" is a good example of this type of pellet.

Pellets labeled "growth" are good for young bunnies, who are building lots of muscle and bone (Purina "green bag" is an example). Strong bones need calcium and protein, and a veggie-only diet is unlikely to provide this. The growing young ones need a higher calorie, higher protein and calcium pellet. Bunnies in their rapid growth spurt (weaning to about

5 months) should receive unlimited pellets. You then can cut back as growth slows. I've noticed that bunnies, especially bigger breeds, tend not to reach their final weight and size until about 11-12 months old, so I may feed these a little more than if they were older.

A mature rabbit still needs protein and calcium. Muscle and bone are not inert. They are constantly being

rebuilt and remodeled, especially if the rabbit is active. A diet that is too deficient in calcium or protein means that bone will not be as strong and the rabbit will have an increased risk for osteoporosis and bone breakage. Strong muscles are needed to keep bone strong, and so protein is needed, too, especially during times of heavy fur shedding (recall that fur is made of pure protein!). However,

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Rugby reads the label on a new bag of pellets.

Valued Volunteer: Tina Otis

Return Hay Boxes

Return your hay boxes to the HRS Office, 4750 Cass Street in Pacific Beach. Returning hay boxes helps save the chapter money and recycles the boxes too. Please return only hay boxes in good condition. Thank you!

This quarter's valued volunteer, Tina Otis, has been actively involved with HRS since 1997 when she began volunteering as both a shelter volunteer and as the HRS bookkeeper. Since her first bunny, Fred, Tina has helped educate hundreds of people about responsible rabbit care, and has opened her own home up to dozens of special bunnies. Here's what Tina had to say about being involved with HRS.



Tina and Brigadier

Sanctuary Angels Needed

If you are interested in helping care for HRS sanctuary rabbits, please contact us – there is always a need. So many "difficult" rabbits languish in shelters, or don't make it out at all. Call today 619-718-7777.

Debra Doerfler: How long have you had house rabbits and what was your first bunny like?

Tina Otis: I got my first rabbit 10 years ago. Sadly, Fred came from a pet store – I didn't know there were bunnies at the shelters. The kid working at the pet store said it was a male but as frequently happens, Fred turned out to be a female.

DD: Almost everyone I know has made mistakes with their first rabbit. What are some that you made and how did you finally find out about HRS?

TO: I had the wrong kind of cage, the wrong litter, and the wrong food. Everything I got at the pet supply store turned out to be wrong. I was treating Fred more like a giant hamster, feeding seed mixes, honey treat sticks, using pine shavings and no litter box. She got very limited run time because she wasn't litter box trained. Luckily, I found out that a co-worker was a former HRS fosterer. She brought me lots of reading materials. This was pre-Internet, so I had to rely on hand-outs and books. Eventually I found the *House Rabbit Handbook*, and that really opened my eyes about proper house rabbit care.

DD: So how did you get involved with House Rabbit Society?

TO: My friend told me about Bunnyfest, and I went to my first one in 1994 and joined as a supporting member. I also picked up more information and found out about getting Fred spayed. But it wasn't until a few years, and a few bunnies later that I started to go to the HRS volunteer meetings.

DD: You've crossed paths with hundreds of rabbits over the years; tell me about your favorite rescue.

TO: Volunteering at the shelter was perilous, because I fell in love with the rabbits there. I ended up adopting some, mostly those who were deemed hard to adopt and had been there for 6 months or longer and some retired pet-assisted therapy bunnies (the bunnies that visit hospitals and nursing homes).

One of the pet-assisted therapy bunnies who had been on duty for over a year developed head tilt and they felt he should have been euthanized. It did not seem right to me not to give him a chance at recovery after he had given so much to the program, so I took him home with me. It was my first experience with head tilt and giving medicine to a rabbit. Brigadier was a great

little patient and soon returned to near normal. He made friends with all the other rabbits and was a great companion. He had several more bouts with head tilt and ear infections during the 4 years I had him. Sadly he had to be put to sleep earlier this year. I have also taken on other special needs rabbits. One rabbit, Wheeler, had lost the use of his back legs. He learned to use a K-9 cart (www.k9carts.com) to get around.

DD: What do you enjoy most about being part of the HRS volunteer group?

TO: People who don't have a passion for rabbits have a hard time understanding what we do and why we do it. Being a part of HRS gives me a chance to be with "my own kind." We love to talk about bunnies and the silly things they do. We can spend hours analyzing bunny behavior.

DD: What do you want to share with our readers that most of us don't know about you?

TO: I am a big Howard Stern fan and am having withdrawal symptoms since he has been taken off the air in San Diego. Having listened to him for years when I lived and worked in New York, I guess I don't get easily shocked or offended by his humor.

Although Tina has scaled back on her volunteer activities – she had to go

back to work to support all her furry friends – she remains an integral part of HRS and can be frequently found at the HRS storefront (first and third Saturdays) answering questions and providing advice to bunny parents. Thank you for all of your continued work with HRS. You are a valued volunteer!



Darlene, far right, and rabbits are on a Fox News broadcast.

We thank Darlene White for her commitment to helping homeless animals by giving them the television exposure they need. Darlene is the media representative/spokesperson for Friends of County Animal Shelters (FOCAS). She often includes HRS foster rabbits in the mix of animals she brings on TV. Thank you Darlene, Channel 8 and Fox 6 News for your support!

Happy Adoption: Baxter and Veronica

It took many, many dates with shelter and HRS foster rabbits before once-confirmed-bachelor Baxter found Veronica at the South County Shelter. Just two months later they are inseparable, and enjoy grooming and frolicking with each other. Pretty good for a 7-year-old guy with one eye.

Before Veronica, Baxter had been intimidated by most of the ladies he had met. His Mom was wondering if he would remain a single bunny when she heard from Judith Pierce that, while visiting Judith, he had jumped out of his

pen, not once but twice, to be near a lovely long-haired lady. That girl bunny had a home, so his love went unrequited. But this experience gave renewed strength to the search for an appropriate mate. He waited for just the right companion, and they seem very happy.



Baxter, left, and Veronica

CALENDAR

JUNE 2004

Saturday, June 5

Office open noon-3 p.m., 4750 Cass St., four blocks north of Garnet in Pacific Beach.

Sunday June 6

Pacific Beach Adoption Day, call 619-718-7777.

Saturday, June 12

Meeting for NEW volunteers, 4750 Cass St., Pacific Beach, 12 noon – 2 p.m. Thinking about volunteering? Join us to learn how you can help make a difference for the rabbits in San Diego.

Saturday, June 19

Office open noon-3 p.m., 4750 Cass St., four blocks north of Garnet in Pacific Beach.

Saturday/Sunday, June 26/27

SD County Fair at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. Visit the HRS booth in the Pet Barn.

Saturday, June 26

Pet Fest and Doggie Dash, Chula Vista Shelter benefit, downtown Chula Vista, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

JULY 2004

Saturday, July 3

Office open noon-3 p.m., 4750 Cass St., four blocks north of Garnet in Pacific Beach.

Saturday, May 17

Office open noon-3 p.m., 4750 Cass St., four blocks north of Garnet in Pacific Beach.

Sunday, May 18

North County Adoption Day, call 619-718-7777.

Hay, Pellets At HRS Store

Remember that you can buy boxed hay (mixed hay and grasses, depending on season) and pellets at the HRS store in Pacific Beach. Your purchases benefit HRS activities in San Diego and keep your bunny healthy. The office is open first and third Saturdays of each month, 12 noon-3 p.m.

Pellets

(continued from page 1)

because a mature rabbit's protein and calcium need is lower than that for a growing rabbit, you can select a pellet with a lower content of these, or cut back further on a high-energy pellet and balance them with extra veggies. These types of pellets are often labeled "maintenance" because they feature a lower energy, protein, and calcium density while still offering essential vitamins and minerals. Some examples of these include Purina HF, American Pet Diner "Timmy," Oxbow Bunny Basics T, and Kaytee's Timothy pellet.

Now, what about alfalfa vs. Timothy-based pellets? Clovers such as alfalfa have a higher protein and calcium content than do grasses, roughly twice as much per unit weight. Thus, in general, alfalfa-based pellets may have a higher protein and calcium content than will grass-based pellets. This varies, however, with the stage of hay that is used, so always read the label on the back of the bag to verify the actual protein and calcium content. (For example, late bloom alfalfa and early bloom Timothy have the same protein content.)

Is one better than the other? For most rabbits, not really. This is because we feed limited pellet amounts to our rabbits, and therefore the rabbits are not receiving an excess of protein or calcium. If your rabbit is maintaining a steady weight, then you are probably feeding the right amount. Here at the main foster home for Wisconsin HRS, all our rabbits receive a low calorie, alfalfa-based pellet (Purina HF, or "high fiber"), and we have not seen protein or calcium problems in the nearly 400 rabbits who have passed through our facility.

There are some special circumstances where pellet choice can become critical. The first is for rabbits who have protein-sensitive bacteria in the cecum. These bunnies produce an excess of

cecal pellets after a meal, because the excess protein that is not digested by the bunny is instead fermented by the cecal bacteria. These bunnies may benefit from a low-protein pellet, cutting back on pellets, or, in very rare circumstances, no pellets at all. (However, if you try this, make sure your rabbit gets essential vitamins and minerals from other sources. Often, however, you can get rid of these bacteria by feeding a straw-only diet for several days before returning to the regular veggie/pellet/hay diet.)

The second special circumstance is for rabbits who have problems metabolizing calcium. This one is still rather a mystery. The problem is that rabbits are different from most animals in that their intestinal tract sucks up dietary calcium and puts it into the blood; most other animals (including people) have less efficient absorption of dietary calcium. This normally isn't a problem, because the bunny's excess calcium is just excreted in the urine. Rabbits are built to do that.

However, this process can go wrong in some rabbits, for reasons we don't understand. An active infection of *E. cuniculi* may be one such cause; in humans, a urinary tract infection can trigger this. In those bunnies, instead of calcium being sent out the urine, it precipitates in the bladder and/or kidney. This can lead to bladder "sludge" and stones, and sometimes kidney calcification. Stones and sludge can be painful to pass, and may increase the risk for urinary tract infections. You can see this if the rabbit is straining to urinate, has urine with a mustard-like consistency, or (in fact) has little-to-no calcium in the urine. (Some calcium powder in the urine is normal and healthy.)

We have to emphasize that we don't know what causes this problem, and thus we don't really know how to cure it. Approaches to improve the situation should include a urinalysis to diagnose the problem, a culture-and-sensitivity

of the (sterile) urine to identify possible infections, and diet strategies to reduce the burden on the kidneys and bladder. However, diet strategies should never put the rabbit at risk for calcium or protein deficiency. This is especially important because rabbits already have fragile bones and cannot afford to lose additional calcium. A diet that is pellet-free and avoids calcium-rich veggies will force your rabbit to draw calcium and protein from precious bone and muscle stores. This puts the rabbit at risk for seizure and death (calcium-deficient tetany), osteoporosis, and bone breakage. Rather than go “cold turkey” on the pellets and calcium-containing veggies, you should instead adjust your rabbit’s diet to achieve a proper balance that meets his nutrient needs without over-stressing the urinary tract. This can be done by switching to a lower calcium/

protein diet, increasing vegetable intake (for important electrolytes, vitamins, and water), and offering water in a crock to stimulate increased drinking.

In summary, to say that “alfalfa” is bad and “Timothy” is good misstates the situation. Both types of pellets can provide a diet that is lower in protein and calcium; the key is to read the product label and then offer food quantities and varieties appropriate to your rabbit’s individual nutrient needs.

By Susan Smith, Ph.D.

Susan Smith is an Associate Professor of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is a long-time educator-fosterer for Wisconsin HRS. Copyright Susan Smith, 2003

CALENDAR

AUGUST 2004

Sunday, Aug. 1

Pacific Beach Adoption Day, call 619-718-7777.

Monday, Aug. 2

Volunteer Meeting, 4750 Cass St., Pacific Beach, 7 p.m. Planning for Bunnyfest.

Saturday, Aug. 7

Office open noon-3 p.m., 4750 Cass St., four blocks north of Garnet in Pacific Beach.

Saturday, Aug. 21

Office open noon-3 p.m., 4750 Cass St., four blocks north of Garnet in Pacific Beach.

Sunday, Aug. 29

North County Adoption Day, call 619-718-7777.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday, Sept. 19

Bunnyfest, Heritage Park, Old Town, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Volunteers needed for a variety of jobs. Call 619-718-7777 for more info.

Keeping Slim and Trim

People are not the only ones who benefit from a well balanced diet and frequent exercise. Rabbits depend upon us to provide them with good, healthy foods – foods they need to live a long and happy life.

Let’s look at the behavior and make-up of a rabbit.

Rabbits are designed to move quickly and at fast speeds, traverse great spans of land in search of food or a mate, and to dig extensive tunnels underground. Sound like something your tubby house bun could do? Probably not.

Of course, most domestic rabbits have their food brought to them and have cozy enclosures in which to spend their days. But their bodies are designed, for the most part, to be active, lean and to eat high-fiber foods. Eating the wrong foods and not burning enough calories may decrease bone strength

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“Do I look fat in this skirt?” Four-year-old French lop Sasha has a droopy “skirt” of fur and skin around her bottom and front legs. This does not necessarily indicate she is overweight, however. In Sasha’s case, she is actually a bit slim for a French Lop. She may just have lost some weight recently. She is a recent relinquish to a local shelter and will be available for adoption at the end of May.

Healthy Veggies for Your Rabbit:

Basil (all types)
Beet greens
Bok choy
Broccoli (stems & florets)
Carrots (restricted, sugary)
Carrot tops
Cilantro
Collard greens
Dandelion greens
Fennel
Kale
Lettuce, dark green only (no iceberg)
Mustard greens
Parsley (curly & flat leaf)
Parsley root
Parsnip
Radish greens
Raspberry leaves
Spinach
Strawberry leaves

Slim

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and lead to obesity, among other health problems.

Too often, people feel the need to give their rabbits a sugary morsel or to free-feed pellets because it's easier and the rabbits appear to love them.

These seemingly minor actions can cause many health problems for our rabbit friends, not to mention the medical bills along the way.

Uncontrolled feeding of a pelleted diet to a house rabbit can lead to obesity, heart and liver disease, chronic diarrhea, and kidney disease as a result of the high concentration of calories, low fiber, and high calcium levels in the pellets, says Dr. Susan Brown of the Midwest Bird & Exotic Animal Hospital, in Westchester, Illinois.

Here are a few common problems associated with a poor diet and limited exercise:

- Obesity – Rabbits may gain too much weight if fed improperly.

- Poor bone density and muscle strength – Bone and muscle development depend heavily on a proper diet and regular exercise.

- Sore hocks – Excessive weight on the hock of the rabbit foot can lead to open wounds. There can be several contributing factors in sore hocks, but a rabbit who is overweight runs a higher risk of developing sore hocks.

- Poopy bottom – A diet low in fiber and too high in protein or carbohydrates may contribute to an over production of cecal pellets. Cecal pellets differ from fecal pellets in that they are dark, soft and have a strong odor. They may get smeared all over or stuck to the rabbits bottom. And, an overweight

rabbit simply cannot reach around to eat them or clean themselves well.

Small breeds such as the Netherland Dwarf may have an increased need for calories because of their fast metabolism. Angoras and Fuzzy Lops may also benefit from higher calorie rations so they can produce long healthy fur. And, sick or elderly rabbits may need increased calories to maintain good weight. When determining the proper food quantity for your rabbit, always take into consideration his age, health, activity level as well as current and ideal weight.

Always change the diet slowly, mixing in new pellets with the previously provided pellets – do not make sudden changes. And always make sure bun is eating the new food. Ask a rabbit-experienced veterinarian for recommendations if you are unsure about what to feed.

A proper diet goes a long way, but exercise and a proper diet go hand in hand and are vital for our furry friends to live a long life. If confined to a cage for many hours a day, not only is the rabbit bored and uninterested, he is possibly afraid and insecure or aggressive.

Encourage exercise. Let your rabbit have run time in a bunny-proofed room of your home at least several hours each day. Provide new and exciting toys.

Instead of purchasing the sugary treats or honey-laden nut bars, we recommend you stop by the HRS office and load up on healthy food and new and exciting toys for your rabbit. And, we appreciate the support! We know it's hard to resist that cute little face or the bunny who rushes to the refrigerator when it opens, but RESIST! Wean her off the bad foods and onto a more nutritious diet. She will eventually get used to it and in return, you will get to spend more time, possibly years more, with your little friend.

By Michelle Wilhelms
San Diego HRS Chapter Manager

Hay Hopper



Keep your rabbit entertained pulling healthful hay out of this 6" cardboard container. Has 3" round holes on three sides and cute bunny and carrot graphics on the other sides. Stuff full of hay and watch your bunny pull out and munch the hay, and even play with and push the box around! Made of cardboard and printed with non-toxic ink; the entire box is safe for bunny to chew. Available at HRS store for...

\$5 empty
\$6 with hay

Also available online (empty only) from www.catsrabbitsandmore.com (tax and shipping extra).

The Hay Hopper should be stuffed full of hay at all times; it is not intended for rabbits to stick their heads in to get hay.

Protecting the “Easter Bunny”

Easter 2004 has come and gone. Through our valiant efforts, we hope we spared many rabbits from the traditional Easter-basket fate.

Our efforts included HRS volunteers who distributed flyers available from both the San Diego Chapter and the national HRS. Press releases and public service announcements were sent to all major radio and TV stations as well as many local newspapers. We also sent special Easter basket goodies (along with press releases) to several local TV stations to entice them to cover the plight of the Easter bunny.

Additionally, web site changes were made to reflect our Easter concern and encourage those looking for a rabbit to educate themselves first.

Our PR volunteer Judith Pierce also appeared on television three times prior to Easter. Thanks go to Judith and also TV stations FOX 6 News and KFMB Channel 8 for their continued support. The Union-Tribune also ran a Question-and-Answer section in the Pet Page prior to Easter and included information from national HRS volunteer, Margo De Mello. Additionally, we ran display ads in the April issue of Family Magazine as well as the Pet Place section of the Union-Tribune.

And below, HRS volunteer and educator Debra Doerfler tells us about her wonderful idea:

“As an employee of the City of Carlsbad and working just 50 yards from one the libraries, I often visit on my lunch hours to sit and relax in a quiet atmosphere. It was on one of these visits that I noticed someone setting up a display in one of the glass cases. After a few e-mails with various staff I discovered that the cases are available to people and groups who have educational materials to display. I immediately contacted the person in charge of the displays to see if any were available for a pre-Easter education push, and to my surprise there were two available at the

Dove Library in Carlsbad.

“The idea behind utilizing the displays was to put eye-catching, concise information out to the public who utilize the library. The items chosen were designed to be both interesting, to encourage passersby to stop and take a closer look, as well as educational.

“Our display was up just two weeks when a visitor to the library contacted me to say, ‘I saw your display and it is wonderful!’

“Since then, several more positive comments have reached us. We hope that everyone who saw it found it interesting and educational, and we hope fewer Easter bunnies were found in children’s baskets this season,” says Debra.

We’d like to thank all the HRS volunteers and supporting members who looked out for the rabbits this Easter holiday. We appreciate all your help!

Tip

Store pellets in an air-tight container in a cool, dry location. They will keep their nutrient value for about 6 months. You can also freeze pellets in a tightly closed container. A food vacuum-sealer is a great way to make convenient packages of pellets with an extended shelf-life.

Purchase healthy pellets from SD HRS

You can now purchase both Oxbow Bunny Basics/T and Oxbow Bunny Basics 15/23 at the SD HRS office.

BB/T, Timothy based:

Crude protein 14%
Crude Fiber 25 - 28%

BB 15/23, Alfalfa based:

Crude protein 15%
Crude Fiber 22 - 25%



These are display cases at the Dove Library, Carlsbad, where Debra placed educational material from House Rabbit Society this Easter season.

A Tribune to Bunny Bunz

It was about October or so, 11.5 years ago, when I was engaged and spending every weekend at my fiancé's place in Ocean Beach. One day on my way home I was driving down a narrow street with cars parked on both sides

and a car approaching. We were in the middle of the block and we stopped to try and figure out if we were going to be able to pass. Out of the corner of my eye I spotted a tiny ball off fluff pop out from behind a car tire and then disappear. The driver of the other car and I both looked at each other then back where the fluff had disappeared. She let me go first and I squished my car into a side alley and got out for a closer look. At that point

I still wasn't sure what it was, though I thought it was a rabbit.

Sure enough when I knelt down in front of the car a little tan ball of fluffy bunny was looking back at me. We had our first conversation.

"What are you doing out here? You're going to get squished." {{Wiggle, wiggle of the nose.}} "Where's your mom?" {{Cock of the ear, wiggle of the nose}} "Well I can't leave you out here!" {{hop, hop}} "Come here you." {{hop, hop, hop}} "Got ya!" {{squirm, squirm}}

I walked halfway up the block to see if there was anything obvious, someone out looking or whatever. Nothing. Right there I decided that if this bunny's mom didn't have enough responsibility to keep the bunny safe then she didn't deserve to have her! Thus I became the

new mom, and a terrible one at that... before finding the HRS.

First I went to Petco and picked up food – Fiesta Mix looked good (bad choice). Then went home with the bunny. What to do, what to do? Where am I going to keep a bunny? Mind you I had no cage and no idea what I was doing! I set up a large (old bird) cage outside in an avocado tree (are you laughing?); it was sort of like a "tree house" for the bunny. She also had a big box to hide in and a towel to sit on.

Over the course of the next couple months Bunz would have run time in the garden (where she frequently almost escaped) and became nearly impossible to catch. Then, after I had married, she and I moved to OB and she was living in a carport in a small, enclosed back yard. Of course, she was still eating bad food and I hadn't a clue that she was fast approaching puberty.

It was here, in this small back yard that she frequently eluded capture, wedging herself between the fence and a tree making it all but impossible for me to get her – until I decided that I could pick her up by her ears (ouch!) It took her ages to forgive me for having done that to her, but she finally did.

About that time I ran across a KW Cages catalog at work and decided she needed a better cage. She got the biggest cage they had! And she was moved up to the enclosed patio that was outside the dining room. Then winter set in...and she finally made it into the house, never to be relegated outdoors again! We kept her in the dining room and she was a happy little camper growing up with Peabody (the kitten). But after a few weeks in the house all these strange behaviors started popping up.

She was circling, nipping, and spraying (bad!!). She even started attacking Peabody (who has never recovered emotionally).



Debra and Bunz

Silver Rabbit

Be sure to see our beautiful new sterling silver rabbit and heart prayer box. Description and photos on www.sandiegorabbits.org. Order online or purchase at our office.

About this time I was going to the pet food store and ran into the HRS angels who saved everything. Boy did I get an ear full! They gave me all the literature, told me about litter boxes and getting her spayed. I went home and read through everything twice and then made an appointment to get her spayed.

We shared a lifetime together, moving from OB to Carlsbad, to Escondido. She helped me through my divorce and we moved two more times before settling down again in Escondido. During her lifetime I fostered countless bunnies and helped hundreds of other at the shelters. She was the best teacher I ever had.

She was really my first pet — the one that I was solely responsible for

and she was my first rabbit — the one that started everything. I still remember the day I found her, it's like it was yesterday, but yet I look up and see her picture on my wall and know that it was a very long time ago. My sweet bunny angel is no longer with me physically, but her spirit comforts me and reminds me that we all make mistakes, we all can learn, we all have to let go sometime and say goodbye to those we love.

Bunny Bunz passed away quietly in her home April 5, 2004 after 11 1/2 years. She is greatly missed.

By Debra Doerfler

An HRS Educator, Debra is a long-time San Diego HRS fosterer and very active, dedicated volunteer.

Rabbit Care Resources

- House Rabbit Society: www.rabbit.org
- San Diego Chapter, House Rabbit Society: www.sandiegorabbits.org
- Rabbit References: www.morfz.com/rabrefs.html
- Cats & Rabbits & More: www.catsandrabbitsandmore.com

Bernie Celebrates His First Birthday

Bernie is pretty lucky to be alive. At two weeks old, Bernie was near death at a swap meet when a concerned citizen spotted him and called Animal Control. Animal Control came out immediately and confiscated him from the people who were trying to sell him. A veterinarian was paged (it was a Sunday). He treated him for several days until he was well enough to be released. At this point, HRS volunteer Gerry Streff came and got him and was his foster Mom for about 9 months. When he was ready to be adopted, she sent me an e-mail asking me to put him up on the Cats & Rabbits & More website. I read her description of him, and wrote back to her, "I'm not going to put him on the website yet. I want to meet him first!" A few days later I went over to her house to meet him and saw that he was very special and needed to go home with me. The rest is history. He's such a delight!



He's funny and energetic, does happy hops all the time, follows me around like a puppy, comes when I call, and loves to be snuggled, petted and kissed.

By Alison Lienbach



Top photo: Bernie celebrates his first birthday with a "carrot cake."

Bottom photo: Bernie at about a month old, held by foster mom Gerry Streff.

Adopting from the HRS

Did you know that rabbits crave companionship and are typically most happy when part of a pair? If you have only one rabbit, go to www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/multiple.html and learn about the advantages of getting a companion. HRS volunteers will be happy to help you find an appropriate companion for your bunny and guide you through the bonding process.

Unless noted otherwise, call 619-718-7777 to learn more about any of these, or other, rabbits.

The HRS adoption fee is \$50 (\$80 for a pair), which includes a spayed or neutered rabbit, free vet exam, box of hay, coupon for another box of hay and a one-year membership in the San Diego House Rabbit Society. Supplies are also available at the HRS store/office.



Meadow is a 7-month-old female lop with one ear up and one ear down. This young lady is sweet and curious, and likes to investigate everything that goes on in her surroundings. We would like to see Meadow go with one of her sisters (see Aspen) or as a companion to a sweet bunny boy.

Aspen is a sweet 7-month-old female lop who is independent and playful. We would like to see her adopted with one of her sisters (see Meadow), or as a companion to a sweet bunny boy. Aspen weighs about 5 lbs and may grow to be a bit larger.



Double the Fun

Experienced bunny families will tell you that bunnies usually prefer to have a friend, and caring for a bonded pair is just as easy as for one! Visit the HRS website to learn more: www.sandiegorabbits.org.

Rabbits Who Need Homes

Pearl, a tiny Jersey Woolly, will need a home where she will receive frequent grooming for her long fur. She will need someone who is comfortable handling small bunnies as they can be a little squirmy. She is too fragile to be handled by children, so a quiet adult home is recommended. Pearl can be a little shy, but she is interested in what her human caretakers are doing. Perhaps with a bonded companion she'd have more confidence. Do you have a bachelor looking for a lovely lady?



Honey Bunny is a sweet rabbit who is about 3 years old and spayed. She has had some health problems – her left eye had to be removed and she was treated for EC – but she's doing just fine

now.

Honey Bunny is playful although a bit shy, and loves to be held. The perfect home for Honey is with adults who have the time to spend doting on her.



Poppy and Marlow are a Jersey Woolly pair who have recently become bonded companions. They are very devoted and love to groom each other. These young bunnies are quite small – only about 2 to 3 pounds each – therefore not suitable for a home with children. They are also a bit shy and can be skittish, so a busy household with children would be too much for them to handle. We hope to place this sweet pair of bunnies in a loving adult home where they will get daily grooming of their long fur. **ADOPTED**



Miss Lilly is a female, about 2 years old, with a spunky attitude and a friendly personality. She's great with her litter box and doesn't mind being held. Lilly is very active, so she needs a home where she can have lots of run

time, and someone special to play with. At this time in her life we don't feel that she's a good companion choice, as she's just a bit too bossy with the boy bunnies. She would do well in an adult home or one with older children (10 or older).



and loves a good long snuggle. We know she would really blossom in a permanent home.

Ranger is a young, dwarf-mix male, about 4 months old. He has just been neutered and is getting good with his litter box. This young boy is sweet, easy to handle and just a bit shy. He's still trying to get used to his new surroundings in foster care. Ranger came in with a bunny family, so is used to being housed with other bunnies. This may make him a good companion choice. Due to his small size, he is not suitable for a home with small children.



George is a standard mix who is a friendly, easy-to-handle boy. He would probably be a good companion for your female bunny – or

perhaps with one of the lovely ladies in HRS foster care.

Oreo is ready to find a home of his own. He loves receiving "pets" and can't get enough attention. He is fairly active and loves to run around and play in his Cottontail Cottage. Oreo will need the stimulation of toys and regular exercise. He is fairly confident and will "stomp" his foot to let you know when he's displeased. Oreo had an eye removed because of an abscess, but he's completely recovered from that episode.



This cute little guy is **Hopper**, also affectionately known as "Kisser." He is something else! He is about 8 months old and on the small side, about 4 lbs. Even though he is neutered, Hopper still circles you and honks softly just hoping for some attention. If that isn't enough, he also gives kisses!



Because of his small size, and because he has been known to lightly nip if not paid proper attention, Hopper would do best in an adult home or one with older children.

Noah is a very cute Dwarf Hotot male who was brought to the shelter by a kind neighbor who couldn't keep him. The neighbor was

concerned that Noah was being neglected. Noah is very small and shy so we do not recommend him for homes with young children. Noah would do best in a quiet home possibly with a spayed female bunny for company.



Georgia is a big beautiful New Zealand black mix girl. She has one white sock and a dot on her chin. She loves attention but can be a little grumpy when you reach into her cage uninvited. Georgia has come along way in foster care. She dances during run time

About the Newsletter

We apologize for the lateness of this issue of San Diego Rabbit News. There was a computer hard drive failure while the issue was being assembled.

We are looking for someone to take over the newsletter. If you have editing and desktop publishing skills and are interested in volunteering for this job, contact Michelle at 858-490-9003.

Note: 10+ years of newsletter archives are in Macintosh format.

Online Update

Want to keep updated on the San Diego chapter activities by e-mail? Join our online update and get monthly updates sent right to your desktop. Send a blank e-mail to: sandiegorabbitsonline-subscribe@yahoo.com or go to our website for a link, www.sandiegorabbits.org.

Local Animal Shelters

(call for hours of operation)

• San Diego County Department of Animal Services:

• Central, 5500 Gaines St., San Diego

619-236-4250

• North County, 2481 Palomar Airport Rd., Carlsbad
760-438-2312

• South County, 5821 Sweetwater Rd., Bonita
619-263-7741

• San Diego Humane Society,
5500 Gaines St., San Diego
619-299-7012

• Chula Vista Animal Shelter, 130 Beyer Way, Chula Vista
619-691-5123

• Rancho Coastal Humane Society, 389 Requeza, Encinitas
760-753-6413

• North County Humane Society & SPCA, 2905 San Luis Rey, Oceanside
760-757-HELP

• Escondido Humane Society,
3450 East Valley Parkway,
Escondido
760-888-BARK

Spring Open House A Popular Event

Our Spring Open House was a great success! Thanks to all the volunteers who made it happen, and to those of you who came by to purchase supplies for your rabbits and to say "Hi." It was great to see everyone – the place was packed. The San Diego Chapter was able to take in about \$1,300 from the Spring Open House.

*Photos by
Alison
Leinbach*





Thank You, Thank You

Thank you to Dr. Brian Loudis and his staff at All Pets Animal Hospital in Encinitas. They donated several bags of Critical Care to HRS foster homes. Thank you so much!

Thank you to Isabelle Paulsen for your donation in memory of Trixie. Miss Trixie was a very special New Zealand White rabbit who was in HRS sanctuary for many years. Sadly, Trixie passed away in March. She will be missed.

Thank you to the following SD HRS members. Your generosity helps us continue our work. We could not do all we do without your support.

Jeanette St. Pierre
Julie Harris
Jackie Dietz
Fred Beyer
Dorothy McCorkle
Lynn Feely
Steven Jones
Renee Ride

Double thanks to HRS member Jason Reich for his corporate matching donation from Qualcomm! Be sure to check and see if your employer participates in a matching donation program.

We Want To Hear From You

Have you adopted from SD HRS? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Send us a note or photo of your happy house bun to be included in the SD Rabbit News. It makes our day to hear our adopted foster buns are doing well!

Who We Are

The San Diego Rabbit News is published by the nonprofit House Rabbit Society, San Diego Chapter. Every reasonable effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information in the News, however the editors and House Rabbit Society assume no responsibility for unintentional errors and omissions.

The content of this newsletter has not been reviewed by the national House Rabbit Society, which is in no way responsible for its content.

There is no expressed or implied recommendation for any vendor/sponsor named in this newsletter.

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Mail comments and suggestions to the San Diego Rabbit News, P.O. Box 2628, Spring Valley, CA 91979 or e-mail to the addresses below.

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Spring Cleaning for Thumper

Don't forget about Thumper's cage when you spring-clean your home. Whether or not you have allergies, it's a good idea to thoroughly clean your rabbit's cage and the surrounding areas every few months.

Note: this is not meant to replace regular cleaning!

Fur, litter, hay and dust can all build up and cause respiratory problems for you and your rabbit. It's a good idea to pull Thumper's cage out or fold down her pen and give everything a good spring cleaning. White vinegar is nontoxic, so use this to clean the cage, cage tray and litter boxes and to clean the floors. If you have carpet, move the cage out and vacuum well to get all the hay and fur cleaned up. Wipe down walls and baseboards too. Clean her food and water bowls well and use white vinegar to clean the litter boxes. Let the boxes soak for a few hours with white vinegar in the bottom if needed to break up the urine build up in the box. It's amazing how clean the litter boxes will get.

You'll also want to change out the carpet sample or straw mat in her cage and give her a fresh set-up. New toys or mats will keep her busy, and she will enjoy her clean new digs as much as you!

If you need a new litter box, more toys, grass mats or even a new cage, be sure to stop by the HRS office to pick up supplies. We have everything you need.

The HRS Office is located at 4750 Cass St. in Pacific Beach, four blocks north of Garnet. It is open the first and third Saturdays each month from 12 noon-3 p.m.

Need tips for dealing with allergies and itchy watery eyes? Have a stuffed up, sneezy nose?

Many people, including HRS volunteers, adopters and fosterers, are allergic to hay and some are allergic to rabbits. Following the ideas suggested below can minimize mild allergies. See your doctor if your allergies are severe. You may require regular medication.

First, determine if you are allergic to the rabbit, certain hays, dust or all of the above.

- Frequent cleaning will help minimize allergies. Clean well on a regular basis.

- Store hay outside or in the garage in a covered tub and wash your hands after feeding hay. If possible, have someone else in the family be responsible for feeding the hay and cleaning up.

- Keep your rabbits limited to just a couple of rooms, not the whole house, and keep them out of the bedroom.

- Groom your rabbit (or have someone else groom her) regularly, and daily during a heavy molt.

- Groom her outside, not inside, so fur does not fly in the house.

- Invest in a good HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter. These filters pull microscopic dust, fur and other irritants from the air. You may need more than one filtering system to sufficiently treat your home. If you have central air in your home, be sure to change the filters often.

ORDER FORM

Name _____

☐ I'm interested in volunteering. Please call me.

Address _____

Apt. _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home phone _____

Work phone _____

E-mail _____

ITEM	COLOR: 1st choice	2nd choice	SIZE	QTY	PRICE EACH	TOTAL
Stories Rabbits Tell , A Natural and Cultural History of a Misunderstood Creature, by Susan E. Davis, Margo DeMello, 320 pages, paperback					\$22	
SAN DIEGO RABBIT NEWS with 1-year San Diego chapter membership 1 YR <i>(San Diego membership does NOT include national membership; join national below)</i>					\$10	no tax
National House Rabbit Society Membership <i>(Does not include local membership or San Diego's newsletter)</i>					1 YR \$18	no tax
House Rabbit Handbook , 3rd edition					\$10	

Stock up on summer apparel and support HRS in San Diego

Caps — Cotton baseball-style caps, one size with adjustable strap. Herman head design (upper right this page). Apricot, aqua, blue, natural \$12

Clock motif T-shirt — Short-sleeve tee, imprinted center front in black. White or gray in S,M,L,XL,XXL \$15

Scoop-neck ladies T-shirt — Clock motif on short-sleeve T. Violet, light blue, light yellow in S,M,L \$15

3-Rabbit T-shirt — Crew-neck short-sleeve T with color illustrations on white backgrounds. Blue or natural in S,M,L,XL,XXL \$15
Scoop-neck ladies short-sleeve T. White, yellow or violet in S,M,L,XL \$15

Babydoll-style T-shirt — "Rabbit in the House" design, falls just to the hip. House colors are red, blue or purple in S,M,L **SALE \$7 each, or 2 for \$12** Sizes/colors are limited so please indicate a second choice.

Rabbit collage poster — Hundreds of photos of San Diego HRS members' rabbits and foster/adopted bunnies, assembled in a magnificent ready-to-frame poster. See it on www.sandiegorabbits.org, Products section or at HRS store. **SALE \$8**

For more items, see Products section of www.sandiegorabbits.org



Clock design



3-rabbit design



Rabbit in House design

For delivery in Calif., add 7.75% sales tax.....

Postage & handling (see below)

Additional donation for San Diego rabbit rescue

TOTAL ENCLOSED

Postage & handling:

Clothing/hats, totes, posters: Southern Cal delivery \$4 first item, \$1 each additional; all other areas, \$5 first item, \$1.50 each additional item.

Grocery pads: 75¢ for one, 50¢ each additional. Books: \$2.40 each

Make checks payable to House Rabbit Society and mail with this order form to P. O. Box 2628, Spring Valley, CA 91979

NOTE: Quantities may be limited in some sizes and colors, so please indicate a second choice.

Spring 2004

San Diego Rabbit News
P. O. Box 2628
Spring Valley, CA 91979

*Check your expiration date
and renew early.*



Printed on recycled paper

Shelter Volunteers Needed

Do you have a few hours a month to volunteer at your local animal shelter? We need shelter volunteers in all areas of the county. Duties include cleaning cages, grooming and socializing rabbits, handing out veggies and hay; and updating HRS. Shelter volunteers must have some experience handling rabbits, be reliable and able to communicate with shelter staff and HRS volunteers.

If you are interested in helping at your local shelter, contact Michelle at 619-718-7777 for further information. The bunnies say thanks and hurry up with the carrots!

Bring Donations to HRS Office

Donate items to the HRS by bringing them to office during open Saturdays. The office is located at 4750 Cass St. in Pacific Beach and is open first and third Saturdays, noon-3 p.m. The foster and shelter volunteers can use the following:

- paper towels
- gallons of white vinegar
- new carpet samples
- returned hay boxes in good condition
- new large litter boxes

Standard Presort
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 51
San Diego, CA

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Bunnyfest 2004 Sunday, Sept. 19

Heritage Park, Old Town • 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Be sure to be there for our fundraising auction, Cottontail Cafe, craft booths and lots more! We are accepting auction donations now and have already received some fabulous items. If you would like to donate to the auction or need a donation request letter, contact Judith Pierce at pierceja@cox.net. Remember, no "dressed" rabbit items. The rabbits thank you for your support.

Updated Hay, CareFRESH Sources

The House Rabbit Hay Exchange offers fresh hay and grasses at an affordable price. For just \$8 (\$8.62 with tax) you get a good-sized box filled with hay. Plan ahead. Don't let your hay supply run out before trying to buy more.

Hay sales by the sources below provide valuable income for the HRS. The money supports our spay/neuter efforts and the veterinary care for our foster and shelter bunnies.

Hay is boxed and distributed by volunteers. **Our hay outlets do change occasionally, so please check this revised list for current hay sources.**

Central San Diego	Cabrillo Veterinary Hospital	619-224-9516
	HRS Office – for open hours, see below	
East County	Rancho San Diego Animal Hospital	619-660-6767
North County	Diane Calkins	760-633-1564
	Acacia Animal Health Center	760-745-8115

The HRS office, some other sources here and many pet supply stores carry Care-FRESH litter. The HRS Office is located at 4750 Cass St., four blocks north of Garnet in Pacific Beach. It is open first and third Saturdays of each month, 12 noon-3 p.m.